DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 509 TM 035 151

AUTHOR	Anthony, Lisa C.; Liu, Mei
TITLE	Analysis of Differential Prediction of Law School Performance by Racial/Ethnic Subgroups Based on the 1996-1998 Entering Law School Classes. LSAC Research Report Series.
INSTITUTION	Law School Admission Council, Newtown, PA.
REPORT NO	LSAC-RR-00-02
PUB DATE	2003-04-00
NOTE	19p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Asian American Students; Black Students; College Entrance Examinations; *Grade Point Average; Hispanic American Students; Law Schools; *Law Students; *Minority Groups; *Prediction; *Test Results
IDENTIFIERS	*Law School Admission Test

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to address questions of differential prediction of law school grades for various racial/ethnic minority subgroups. Differential prediction was evaluated by comparing the predicted and actual law school first-year grade point averages (FYAs) for various racial/ethnic subgroups within individual law schools based on regression equations commonly used in the admission process. The sample was drawn from the 1996, 1997, and 1998 entering law school classes, using data from the Law School Admission Council sponsored Correlation Studies. Data from 167 law schools, each of which enrolled 10 or more first-year students who identified themselves as Asian American, Black, or Latino were analyzed and reported. Statistical regression analyses were carried out to predict FYA using Law School Admission Test (LSAT) alone, undergraduate grade point average (UGPA) alone, and the best predictive linear combination of these two variables. Analyses were carried out separately for each school, resulting in three regression lines for each law school. Analyses were also carried out for the combined group of students in the study. Results indicate that the equation combining LSAT score and UGPA to predict FYA results in more accurate prediction than an equation using either LSAT score or UGPA in isolation. FYA tended to be overpredicted on average very slightly by this equation for all three of the minority groups, with the most overprediction for Black students and the least for Asian American students. The use of UGPA alone to predict FYA consistently resulted I the greatest average overprediction of FYA. These results do not support the concern that LSAT score or the traditional combination of LSAT score and UGPA may result in unfair admission decisions for the minority subgroups studied here. (Contains 4 tables, 6 figures, and 13 references.) (Author/SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

TM TMTR 10186

ED 479 509

LSAC RESEARCH REPORT SERIES

Analysis of Differential Prediction of Law School Performance by Racial/Ethnic Subgroups Based on the 1996-1998 Entering Law School Classes

Lisa C. Anthony
Mei Liu

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Vaseleck

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Law School Admission Council
LSAT Technical Report 00-02
April 2003

TM035151

A Publication of the Law School Admission Council

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LSAC RESEARCH REPORT SERIES

Analysis of Differential Prediction of Law School Performance by Racial/Ethnic Subgroups Based on the 1996-1998 Entering Law School Classes

Lisa C. Anthony
Mei Liu

Law School Admission Council
LSAT Technical Report 00-02
April 2003

A Publication of the Law School Admission Council

The Law School Admission Council is a nonprofit corporation that provides services to the legal education community. Its members are 201 law schools in the United States and Canada.

Copyright© 2003 by Law School Admission Council, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any part or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission of the publisher. For information, write: Communications, Law School Admission Council, 661 Penn Street, Box 40, Newtown, PA 18940-0040.

LSAT® and LSAC are registered marks of the Law School Admission Council, Inc.

This study is published and distributed by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). The opinions and conclusions contained in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Law School Admission Council.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Introduction 1

Methods 2

Sample 2

LSAT Version 2

Variables Used in the Study 3

Analysis Methods 3

Results 4

Descriptive Statistics 4

Predicting First-year Averages 9

Conclusions 13

References 14

Executive Summary

This study was designed to address questions of differential prediction of law school grades for various racial/ethnic minority subgroups. Such research is essential for assuring that the admission process is fair to all subgroups in the applicant population. Differential prediction was evaluated by comparing the predicted and actual law school first-year grade-point averages (FYAs) for various racial/ethnic subgroups within individual law schools based on regression equations commonly used in the admission process.

The sample used in this study was drawn from 1996, 1997, and 1998 entering law school classes, using data that were available from the Law School Admission Council (LSAC)-sponsored Correlation Studies. Data from 167 law schools, each of which enrolled 10 or more first-year students who identified themselves as Asian American, black, or Latino were analyzed and reported.

Statistical regression analyses were carried out to predict FYA using Law School Admission Test (LSAT) alone, undergraduate grade-point average (UGPA) alone, and the best predictive linear combination of these two variables. Analyses were carried out separately for each law school included in the study, resulting in three regression lines for each law school. The regression analyses were carried out for the combined group of students included in the study (i.e., combined minority and nonminority subgroups).

The results reported here indicate that the equation combining LSAT score and UGPA to predict FYA resulted in more accurate prediction than an equation utilizing either LSAT score or UGPA in isolation. FYA tended to be overpredicted on average very slightly by this equation for all three of the minority groups studied here, with black law students exhibiting the most overprediction and Asian American law students exhibiting the least overprediction. The use of UGPA alone to predict FYA consistently resulted in the greatest average overprediction of FYA. These results do not support the concern that the LSAT score or the traditional combination of LSAT score and UGPA may result in unfair admission decisions for the minority subgroups studied here.

While considering the results of this study, the reader should keep in mind that they refer only to subgroup behavior and not to individuals. For example, while results may suggest that UGPAs alone may overpredict FYAs for black law students on average, the performance of many individual black law students may be underpredicted based solely on their UGPAs.

Introduction

Recently, the proportion of minority students in law schools has increased, due in part to efforts to increase diversity among law school students, and, ultimately, within the legal profession. Between the 1988-89 and 1998-99 academic years, the percentage of Asian American first-year law school students rose from 3.0 to 6.5; the percentage of black first-year law school students rose from 5.7 to 8.1, and the Latino representation in first-year law school classes rose from 3.4 to 5.3 percent (Morgan & Snyder, 1999).

While the representation of these racial/ethnic groups in first-year law school classes is increasing, the difference between minority and nonminority performance on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) remains significant. These differences in average LSAT scores continue to raise questions about the validity of the test for minority test takers and about possible differences in prediction of law school performance as a consequence of relying in whole or in part on LSAT scores. One method used to evaluate the fairness of the LSAT is to compare the predicted and actual first-year grade-point averages (FYA) for each law school for various subgroups of the applicant population. If one subgroup of the applicant population experiences either significantly more overprediction (average predicted FYA greater than the average actual FYA) or underprediction (average predicted FYA less than the average actual FYA) than some other group, then *differential prediction* is said to occur. The purpose of the current study is to address questions of differential prediction for various racial/ethnic subgroups based on data from the 1996, 1997, and 1998 first-year classes.

Indeed, these questions are not new to research sponsored by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), nor are they unique to the LSAT or to the law school admission process. Several studies using LSAT data to investigate questions of differential subgroup validity have been sponsored previously by the LSAC (Anthony, Reese, & Pashley, in press; Linn & Hastings, 1984; Powers, 1977; Schrader & Pitcher, 1976a, 1976b; Wightman & Muller, 1990). Differential prediction has also been the subject of research studies for other admission-testing programs such as the SAT (e.g., Breland, 1979; Willingham, Lewis, Morgan, & Ramist, 1990) and the Graduate Management Admission Test (e.g., Braun & Jones, 1981). Numerous studies focusing on the same questions in the arena of employment testing have also been reported (e.g., Houston & Novick, 1987; National Research Council, 1989; Schmidt & Hunter, 1981). Most of these studies concluded that, although there is evidence of differential prediction for minorities, there is no evidence of test bias against those groups. That is, the use of the majority regression or the use of the pooled regression model tends to overpredict or at least not underpredict minority performance on the criterion variable.

The present study is an ongoing monitoring effort and is designed to address the following question:

> Do either of the traditional predictors of first-year law school performance—LSAT and undergraduate grade-point average (UGPA)—or the combination of both of these predictors result in differential prediction for minority applicants?

Earlier studies by Anthony et al. (in press), Powers (1977), and Wightman and Muller (1990) looked at similar questions. The Wightman and Muller (1990) study included data from Hispanic students as well as from black and Mexican American law students. That study provided limited representation among law schools, including data from 51 schools that had sufficient numbers of black students, 7 schools that had sufficient Mexican American students, and 13 schools that had sufficient Hispanic students. The Anthony et al. (in press) study included data from Asian American students as well as from black and Latino students. That study provided broad representation among law schools, including data from 110 schools that had sufficient numbers of Asian American students, 139 schools that had sufficient black students, and 109 schools that had sufficient Latino students. Data from students who entered law school in 1996, 1997, and 1998 who earned LSAT scores on the most recent version of the test and whose scores were reported on the 120 to 180 LSAT score scale were analyzed for the current study. Like the Anthony et al. study, data from Asian American students as well as from black and Latino students were analyzed here. The sample included data from 118 schools that had sufficient numbers of Asian American students, 142 schools that had sufficient black students, and 108 schools that had sufficient Latino students.

Methods

Sample

The sample used in this study was drawn from 1996, 1997, and 1998 entering law school classes. The study included all American Bar Association-approved law schools in the United States and Puerto Rico for which three years of sufficient minority data were available and that participated in the 1999 LSAC Correlation Studies. Canadian schools were excluded from this report since they did not participate in the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS). While 174 law schools participated in the correlation studies for those years, after excluding the Canadian schools, 167 schools were included in this study. This means that data for approximately 96 percent of those schools participating in the correlation studies for the time period of interest were included here. The total pool included approximately 87,766 law school students across three entering classes. The data from the three classes were combined in order to increase the number of records for minority students, both to assure stability in the analyses and to increase the representation of law schools.

The analyses carried out here focused on Asian American, black, and Latino student subgroups. The racial/ethnic identity used for the correlation studies data is based on a self-reported description code provided by students on the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) subscription form. Note that the Latino subgroup consisted of those students who reported their ethnicity as either Hispanic or Mexican American.

Data were analyzed separately for each law school that had 10 or more students from at least one of the minority groups of interest. Among the schools that participated in the 1999 Correlation Studies, 118 had 10 or more Asian American students, 142 had 10 or more black students, and 108 had 10 or more Latino students.

LSAT Version

All students whose data were used in this study were tested with the most recent version of the LSAT. The current version of the test includes five 35-minute sections. Four sections contain items designed to measure analytical (or deductive) reasoning, verbal (logical) reasoning, and reading comprehension. One section is a variable section that contains material that is used to pretest new questions or preequate new test forms. The variable section does not contribute to the test taker's score.

The specific item type makeup is as follows:

Item Type	Number of Items	Time
Reading Comprehension	26 to 28	35 minutes
Logical Reasoning A	24 to 26	35 minutes
Logical Reasoning B	24 to 26	35 minutes
Analytical Reasoning	22 to 24	35 minutes

The total number of scored items on a form usually ranges from 100 to 102. A single score derived from the sum of the total number of questions answered correctly across the four scored sections is then equated and reported on an LSAT scale that ranges from 120 to 180. A 30-minute writing sample is administered at the end of the test. This writing assessment is not scored by LSAC, but copies of the writing sample are sent to all law schools to which the test taker applies.

Variables Used in the Study

The variables analyzed in this study are those that are currently used in the LSAC Correlation Studies: first-year law school grade point average (FYA), undergraduate grade-point average (UGPA), and LSAT score. LSAT score and UGPA are the predictor variables (i.e., the variables that are used to predict performance in the first year of law school). FYA, the measure of performance in the first year of law school, is the criterion variable, or the variable that LSAT and UGPA are used to predict. Only students for whom data are available on each of the three variables were included in this study.

Additional operational details related to these three variables are now given:

First-year average. This variable is the average grade earned by the student in the first year of law school. First-year average is provided for each student by the individual law schools. Different law schools use different scales for first-year grades. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the individual schools and to allow direct comparison across law schools, FYA values were transformed to a scale having a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. Results presented in this report are on the transformed 50/10 scale.

Undergraduate grade-point average. The average grade earned by each student during his or her undergraduate study is computed by the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS), according to LSDAS procedures. Grades computed in this manner are expressed on a scale of 0.00 to 4.33. The UGPA used in these studies are the same as those used in the LSAC Correlation Studies carried out for individual law schools.

LSAT scores. Only LSAT scores reported on the 120 to 180 score scale were used in this study. For students who have multiple LSAT scores, a single arithmetic average (i.e., mean) of the multiple scores was used. If any student took the test more than three times, only the most recent three scores were averaged.

Analysis Methods

This study was undertaken to evaluate the fairness and appropriateness of using LSAT score and UGPA to predict performance in law school for minority students from a single prediction equation developed from data of white students and minority students combined. In other words, the study seeks to evaluate the potential for differential prediction across Asian American, black, Latino, and white law school student subgroups. The same analyses that are used in the ongoing predictive validity studies for individual schools that participate in the LSAC Correlation Studies were used in this study. Three least-squares regression analyses were used to predict FYA from UGPA, from LSAT score, and from a combination of the two predictors. The analyses were carried out separately for each law school using the pooled three-year data. Consequently, the implicit assumption of the validity of pooling data across three years within a single law school so as to achieve stable regressions was made in the present study, as it is for the LSAC Correlation Studies. Additionally, some basic summary statistics (counts, percents, and means) were calculated to compare the minority and nonminority test takers included in this study.

Results

The results from this study are presented in two parts. The first part includes descriptive data about the minority and nonminority first-year students. The results of applying the prediction equations derived using the total group data (i.e., minority and nonminority first-year students) are reported in the second part.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the sample of students within the law schools used in this study are presented in Tables 1-4. These data provide information about the number and proportion of minority and nonminority students and the size of the minority groups among the law schools included in this study. This allows for the comparison of LSAT performance, undergraduate grade-point average (UGPA), and performance in the first-year of law school (FYA) between minority and nonminority students.

Table 1 describes the overall racial/ethnic subgroup breakdown among the 174 schools that participated in the 1999 LSAC Correlation Studies. Table 2 provides similar information for the 167 schools included in the current study. A comparison of the two tables shows that this study is very representative of the LSAC Correlation Studies sample. Of the 87,766 students at the 167 schools represented across the three years, 5,647 (6.4%) were Asian American; 6,205 (7.1%) were black; 4,564 (5.2%) were Latino; and 65,359 (74.5%) were white. The percentages of minorities among schools included in this study are similar to the percentages reported by the American Bar Association (Morgan & Snyder, 1999) for all law schools.

TABLE 1

Number and percentage of Asian American, black, Latino, and white first-year students among schools that were included in the 1999 LSAC correlation studies

Entering Class	Total	Number of Schools	Asian American		Black		Latino		White	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1996	29,847	168	1,917	6.4	2,082	7.0	1,500	5.0	22,600	75.7
1997	29,800	168	1,871	6.3	1,979	6.6	1,476	5.0	22,699	76.2
1998	30,730	174	2,066	6.7	2,189	7.1	1,607	5.2	21,950	71.4
Pooled Data	90,377	174	5,854	6.5	6,250	6.9	4,583	5.1	67,249	74.4

TABLE 2

Number and percentage of Asian American, black, Latino, and white first-year students among schools that were included in the current study

Entering Class	Total	Number of Schools	Asian American		Black		Latino		White	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1996	28,994	161	1,853	6.4	2,064	7.1	1,493	5.2	21,937	75.7
1997	28,923	161	1,804	6.2	1,965	6.8	1,471	5.1	22,063	76.3
1998	29,849	167	1,990	6.7	2,176	7.3	1,600	5.4	21,359	71.6
Pooled Data	87,766	167	5,647	6.4	6,205	7.1	4,564	5.2	65,359	74.5

Table 3 provides a distribution of law schools by percentage of subgroup enrollment across the 167 law schools. Table 3 reveals that most law schools included in this study have between zero and 10 percent representation for the Asian American, black, and Latino student subgroups. It also displays quite clearly that most of the law schools included in this study are made up primarily of white students.

TABLE 3

Distribution of law schools by percentage of subgroup enrollment

Percent Subgroup Enrollment	Asian American		Black		Latino		White	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
0-10	86.20	144	85.00	142	90.40	151	2.40	4
11-20	12.60	21	12.60	21	7.20	12	0.60	1
21-30	0.60	1	0.00	0	1.80	3	0.00	0
31-40	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.60	1	1.80	3
41-50	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	1.20	2
51-60	0.60	1	1.20	2	0.00	0	7.20	12
61-70	0.00	0	0.60	1	0.00	0	13.20	22
71-80	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	30.50	51
81-90	0.00	0	0.60	1	0.00	0	35.90	60
91-100	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	7.20	12

Table 4 indicates that the sample included 118 law schools that met the sample size requirements for Asian American students, 142 schools that met the requirements for black students, and 108 schools that met the requirements for Latino students. The number of schools included in this study is similar to the results presented by Anthony, Reese, & Pashley (in press).

TABLE 4

Summary of the number of included law schools by size of minority subgroup

	Size of Subgroup					
Minority Subgroup	10-29	30-49	50-74	75-99	100 or more	Total
Asian American	57	26	14	8	13	118
Black	62	43	25	6	6	142
Latino	56	25	13	7	7	108

Figure 1a presents the differences between mean LSAT score for black and white students. In calculating the data presented in this figure, the mean LSAT score was first calculated separately for each subgroup at each school. The difference between the means for the two subgroups being compared (i.e., LSAT mean for white students minus LSAT mean for black students) was then determined. Figure 1a summarizes the number of schools displaying each LSAT mean difference observed. Figures 1b and 1c present similar analyses of mean differences for the black and white student subgroups in UGPA and FYA, respectively. Figures 1a through 1c reveal that white students tend to outperform black students on each of the predictors, LSAT and UGPA, and on the criterion measure, first-year average in law school.

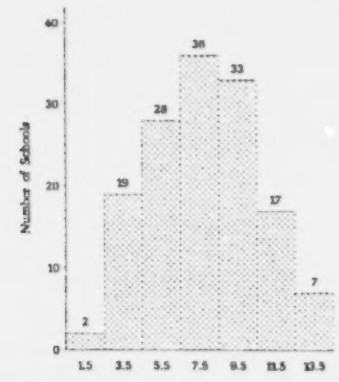

FIGURE 1a: *Frequency distribution of differences between LSAT means for the black and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

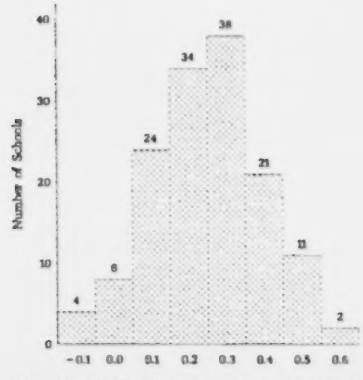

FIGURE 1b: *Frequency distribution of differences between UGPA means for the black and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

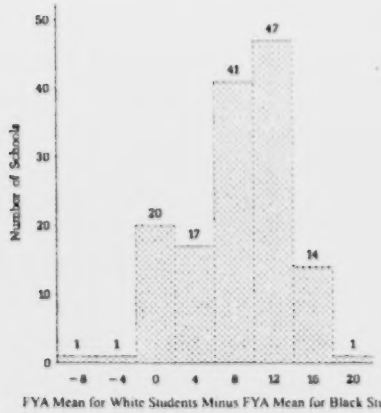

FIGURE 1c: *Frequency distribution of differences between FYA means for the black and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figures 2a through 2c present similar analyses of the mean differences between the performance of white and Latino law students on LSAT, UGPA, and FYA, respectively. Figures 3a through 3c present results comparing the performance of white and Asian American law students on these variables. A pattern of LSAT, UGPA, and FYA differences similar to but less extreme than those observed for the black subgroup is observed for the Latino subgroup. Differences reported for the Asian American subgroup tend to be smaller, but in the same direction of those reported for the other two minority subgroups.

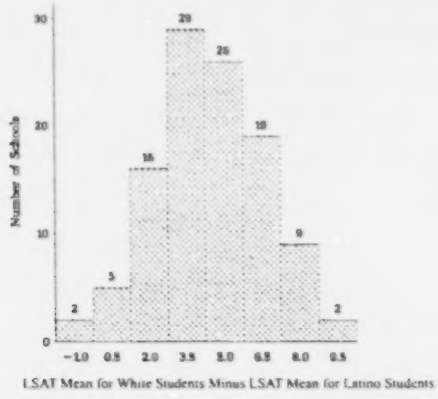

FIGURE 2a: *Frequency distribution of differences between LSAT means for the Latino and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

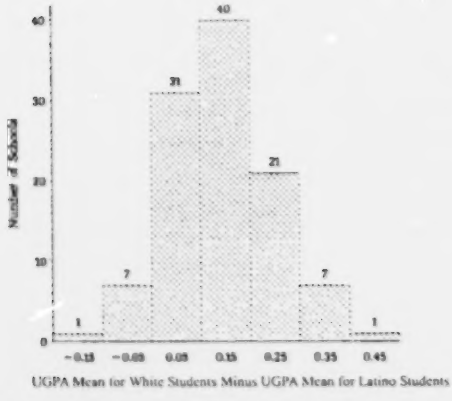

FIGURE 2b: *Frequency distribution of differences between UGPA means for the Latino and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

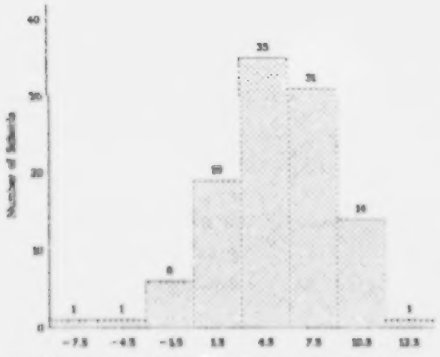

FIGURE 2c: *Frequency distribution of differences between FYA means for the Latino and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

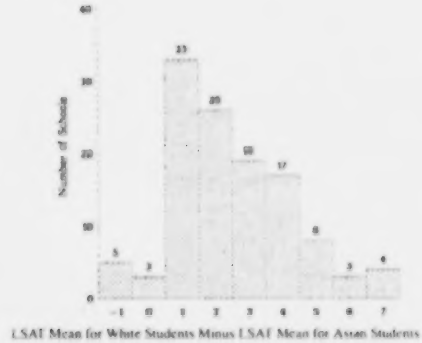

FIGURE 3a: *Frequency distribution of differences between LSAT means for the Asian American and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

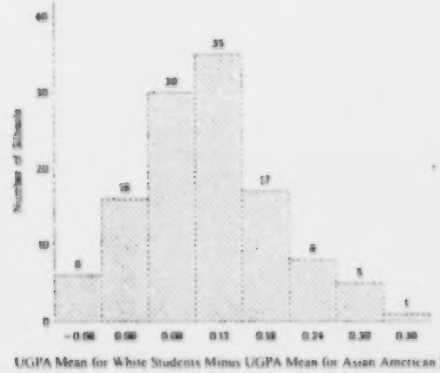

FIGURE 3b: *Frequency distribution of differences between UGPA means for the Asian American and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

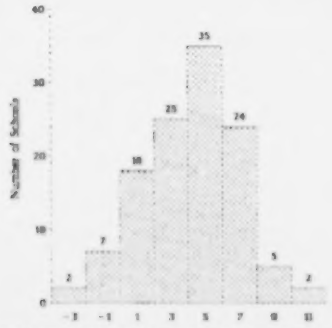

FIGURE 3c: *Frequency distribution of differences between FYA means for the Asian American and white student subgroups at the participating law schools*

Predicting First-year Averages

The primary research question addressed by this study was whether or not LSAT, UGPA, and the combination of these two predictor variables differentially predicted FYA for minority subgroups as compared to majority law school students. Predictions were made by deriving separate regression equations for the total group of law school students within each individual law school using LSAT alone, UGPA alone, and the combination of LSAT and UGPA to predict law school FYA. Comparisons between the predicted and actual FYA were then made for each subgroup based on each regression equation. The calculations and comparisons were made using each school's own grading scale, but all of the first-year averages were converted to a scale where the mean for the total group was set to 50 and the standard deviation to 10. The conversion was made to preserve the confidentiality of the data and to allow comparisons across law schools. Distributions of the differences between predicted and actual FYA means are presented graphically for each prediction equation for each subgroup. To further summarize this data, the weighted average of the mean residuals between predicted and actual FYA is also discussed for each prediction equation/subgroup combination.

Figures 4a through 4c show the differences between predicted and actual first-year average means for white and black law students using LSAT only, UGPA only, and LSAT and UGPA combined as the predictor variables, respectively. Note that a negative value indicates that the regression equation underpredicted the mean (or average) performance of a subgroup in a law school, while a positive difference indicates that the regression equation overpredicted the mean performance of a subgroup in a law school. Recall that FYA values were transformed to a scale having a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.

Figure 4a reveals that when first-year average is estimated from a regression equation based on data from the white and minority groups combined, LSAT alone emerges as an accurate predictor of law school performance for the white subgroup, but tends to slightly overpredict the performance of black students on average. The mean residual for the black subgroup using LSAT alone as the predictor in this study is 2.51 points, indicating a modest amount of overprediction, on average. Figure 4b reveals that UGPA alone overpredicts the performance of black law school students to a greater extent than LSAT alone and slightly underpredicts the performance of white law students in this study. The mean residual observed for the black subgroup using UGPA alone as the predictor is 5.25 points. Finally, the prediction equation combining LSAT and UGPA, presented in Figure 4c, resulted in the most accurate prediction of law school performance for black students among the prediction equations studied here. The mean residual observed here for the black subgroup using the combination of LSAT and UGPA as the predictor variables is 1.23 points, indicating that on average, the overprediction produced by this equation is very slight.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

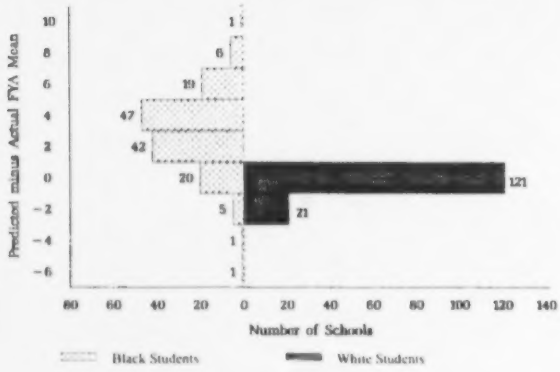

FIGURE 4a: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for black and white student subgroups at participating law schools using LSAT score as the predictor variable*

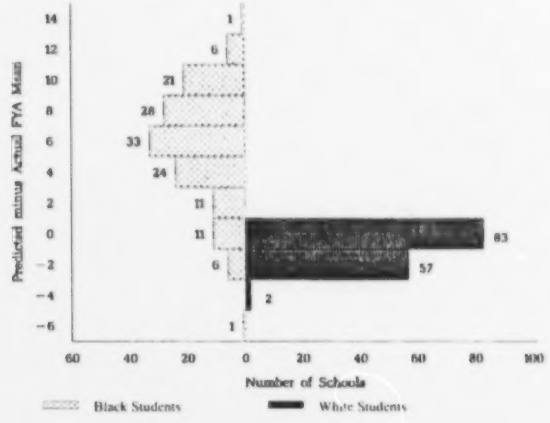

FIGURE 4b: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for black and white student subgroups at participating law schools using UGPA as the predictor variable*

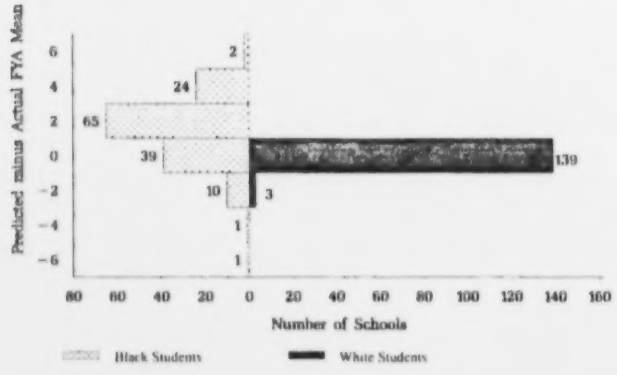

FIGURE 4c: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for black and white student subgroups at participating law schools using LSAT score and UGPA as the predictor variables*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The results for the Latino subgroup, presented in Figures 5a through 5c, reveal a similar pattern to the results observed for the black subgroup, though performance of this subgroup is overpredicted to a lesser extent than that observed for the black students. The mean residuals observed for the Latino subgroup using LSAT alone, UGPA alone, and the combination of LSAT and UGPA as predictor variables were 1.45, 2.85, and 0.86, respectively. Like the results reported for the black subgroup, the combination of LSAT and UGPA emerges as the most accurate predictor of law school performance for Latino students, and the use of UGPA alone to predict FYA results in the most overprediction among the equations studied here.

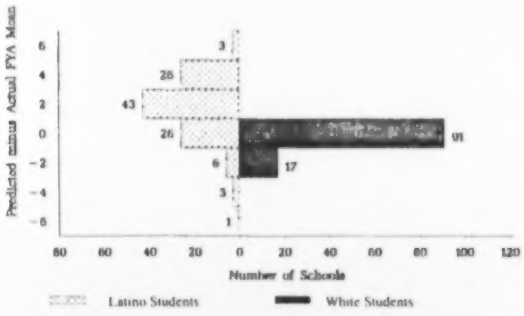

FIGURE 5a: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for Latino and white student subgroups at participating law schools using LSAT score as the predictor variable*

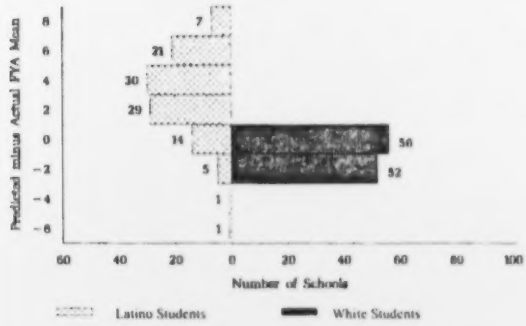

FIGURE 5b: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for Latino and white student subgroups at participating law schools using UGPA as the predictor variable*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

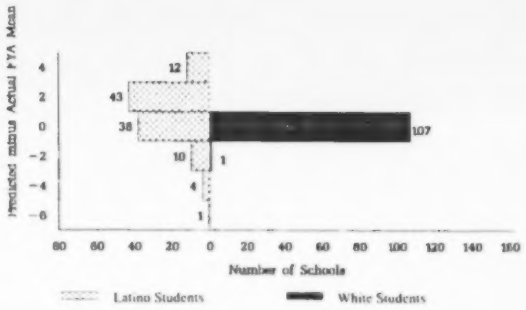

FIGURE 5c: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for Latino and white student subgroups at participating law schools using LSAT score and UGPA as the predictor variables*

Predictive validity results for the Asian American subgroup are presented in Figures 6a through 6c. The mean residuals observed for the Asian American subgroup were 1.69 for the equation using LSAT alone as the predictor, 2.03 for the equation using UGPA alone as the predictor, and 1.40 for the equation combining LSAT score and UGPA to predict FYA. These results reveal a similar pattern to that observed for the black and Latino student subgroups in that the use of UGPA alone results in the most overprediction of FYA, and the use of the combination of LSAT and UGPA results in the most accurate prediction of FYA. Again, the overprediction observed for all three prediction equations is slight, on average.

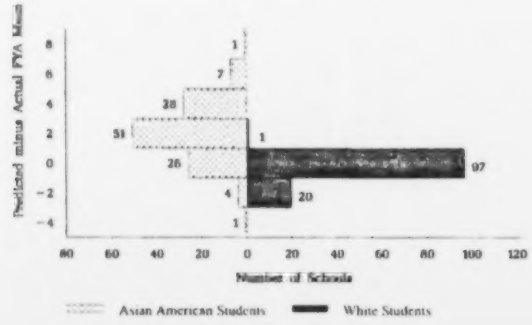

FIGURE 6a: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for Asian American and white student subgroups at participating law schools using LSAT score as the predictor variable*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

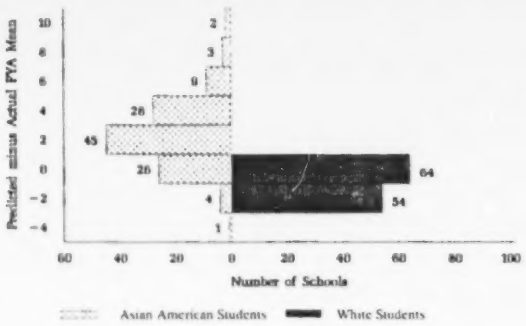

FIGURE 6b: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for Asian American and white student subgroups at participating law schools using UGPA as the predictor variable*

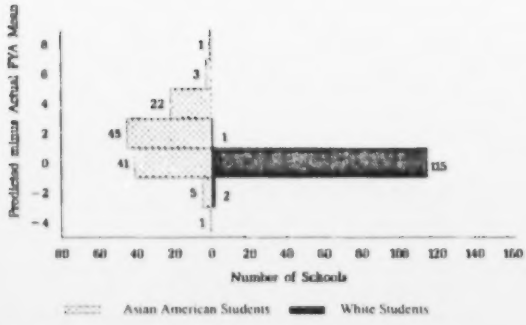

FIGURE 6c: *Frequency distributions of differences between predicted and actual FYA means for Asian American and white student subgroups at participating law schools using LSAT score and UGPA as the predictor variables*

Conclusions

This study analyzed data from 167 law schools, each of which enrolled 10 or more first-year students who identified themselves as a member of one of three minority subgroups—Asian American, black, or Latino. The present study, like earlier studies of its kind, was conducted to determine whether evidence exists of differential prediction for members of different racial/ethnic subgroups. More importantly, results of this study were evaluated to determine if the current practices used to predict law school performance are unfair to certain minority subgroups. Use by admission committees of a regression equation that systematically excludes members of some minority subgroup by underpredicting the performance of its members or overpredicting the performance of some other group could result in admission decisions that are unfair to minority group members.

Regression equations derived by combining data for all minority and nonminority students included in this study were used to evaluate differential prediction of law school FYA when LSAT alone, UGPA alone, and LSAT and UGPA combined were used as predictors. The use of UGPA alone as a predictor seems to produce the most differential prediction for all three of the minority subgroups studied. The data confirm that using the combination of LSAT and UGPA produces the least amount of differential prediction, as compared to using either predictor alone for each of the subgroups studied. In fact, the overprediction observed when applying this equation was very small.

While the use of LSAT and UGPA in combination resulted in the most accurate prediction of first-year

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

law school performance, it is worth noting that none of the regression equations studied would serve to systematically exclude members of the three minority groups studied here. Performance of the minority students tended to be slightly overpredicted on average rather than underpredicted for all three of the regression models evaluated. The performance of white students was slightly underpredicted by the use of UGPA alone, but this difference was greatly diminished in the regression equation combining LSAT and UGPA.

At least two caveats should be remembered while evaluating the results of this study. First, only differences in average predicted performance were analyzed. That is, individuals within a subgroup which is overpredicted on average may still be themselves underpredicted in terms of their individual law school performance. Second, differential prediction is only one aspect of an overall construct validity evaluation.

References

Anthony, L. C., Reese, L. M., & Pashley, P. J. (in press). *An analysis of differential prediction of law school performance by ethnic subgroups* (LSAC Technical Report 98-02). Newtown, PA: Law School Admission Council, Inc.

Braun H., & Jones, D. (1981). *The Graduate Management Admission Test prediction bias study* (Graduate Management Admission Council, Report No. 81-04, and Educational Testing Service, RR-81-25). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Breland, H. (1979). *Population validity and college entrance measures* (Research Monograph No. 8). New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

Houston, W. M., & Novick, M. R. (1987). Race-based differential prediction in Air Force technical training programs. *Journal of Educational Measurement, 24*, 309-320.

Linn, R. L. & Hastings, C. N. (1984). Group differentiated prediction. *Applied Psychological Measurement, 8*, 165-172.

Morgan, R.L., & Snyder, K., Esq. (Eds.). (1999). *Official American Bar Association guide to approved law schools* (2000 ed.). New York: Macmillan.

National Research Council. (1989). Differential validity and differential prediction. In John A. Hartigan and Alexandra K. Wigdor (Eds.), *Fairness in employment testing: validity generalization, minority issues, and the general aptitude test battery* (pp. 172-188). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Powers, D. E. (1977). *Comparing predictions of law school performance for Black, Chicano, and White law students* (LSAC Research Report 77-3). Newtown, PA: Law School Admission Services, Inc.

Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1981). Employment testing: Old theories and new research findings. *American Psychologist, 36*, 1128-1137.

Schrader, W. B., & Pitcher, B. (1976a). *Predicting law school grades for Black American law students* (LSAC Research Report 73-6). Princeton, NJ: Law School Admission Council, Inc.

Schrader, W. B., & Pitcher, B. (1976b). *Prediction of law school grades for Mexican American and Black American students* (LSAC Research Report 74-8). Princeton, NJ: Law School Admission Council, Inc.

Wightman, L. F., & Muller, D. G. (1990). *An analysis of differential validity and differential prediction for Black, Mexican American, Hispanic, and White law school students* (LSAC Research Report 90-03). Newtown, PA: Law School Admission Council, Inc.

Willingham, W. W., Lewis, C., Morgan, R., & Ramist, L. (1990). *Predicting college grades: An analysis of institutional trends over two decades.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").